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THE WORK OF THE NORTH CAROLINA COUNCIL OF ENGLISH TEACHERS

By MISS RENNIE PEELE
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IT HAS been rather disconcerting to members of the State Council of English teachers to meet so often with the assertion on the part of educators, more or less prominent: "Why, I didn't know that there was an association of English teachers in North Carolina." But two things have happened quite recently to soothe our wounded vanity. One of these is the fact that our representative at the National Council of English Teachers which met recently at Chicago, though the first delegate the State has sent to the National Convention, was invited to take part in the discussions of that body and was the only Southerner on the program. The other source of pride is that Dr. Highsmith, State Inspector of High Schools, has asked the Council to prepare a course of study in English for the high schools of the State. In spite of this State and national recognition, however, we think it not out of place to give an account of ourselves.

The North Carolina Council of English Teachers was organized at Chapel Hill, July 25, 1918, during the session of the University Summer School. At the suggestion of Dr. Edwin Greenlaw, a group of superintendents, supervisors, and English teachers, twenty-five in all, banded themselves together and dedicated themselves to an earnest effort to bring about a greater unity of aim and a better standardization of English teaching in the schools and colleges of the State. Miss Eleanor Watson, of the Salisbury schools, was elected president, and under her leadership a meeting was planned for the next Thanksgiving. These plans were interrupted by the influenza epidemic of that year and the meeting postponed until the following May. At that meeting, held at the North Carolina College for Women, Greensboro, Dr. Koch, of the University, delivered a lecture on *Community Dramatics*, the chief practical result of which was co-operation between the University and some of the high schools of the State in the presentation of commencement pageants.

The next meeting of the council was held in Raleigh, November 19, at the time of the State Teachers' Assembly. The chief speaker of the occasion was Dr. William Allen Wilbur, dean and professor of English of George Washington University, who gave an inspiring address on *Citizenship Through the Teaching of English*. Every teacher who heard Dr. Wilbur went back to work with a higher conception of the English teacher's opportunity and responsibility. Other topics

discussed at the Raleigh meeting were: *The English Course in the Rural High School*; *The What, When and Where of Oral Theme Work*; and *High School Journalism*. As a result of a suggestion of Professor Hibbard, professor of journalism of the University, that high school classes obtain the privilege of editing a page of their city newspaper, this experiment was tried by the junior class of the Goldsboro High School and later by the senior class of the Elizabeth City High School. Copies of either of these publications may be obtained by writing to the English departments of these schools.

Because it was difficult to arrange the meetings so as not to conflict with those of the General Teachers' Assembly, it was decided the next year that the Council should hold its annual meetings in March at such time and place as the executive committee should designate. Accordingly, the third meeting was held March 4-5, 1921, at the North Carolina College for Women. Dr. Allan Abbott of Teachers' College, Columbia University, was the chief speaker before the Conference at this time. He not only opened the meeting with an address that was both practical and inspiring, but remained throughout all the sessions of the Conference, joining in all the discussions and giving freely of his advice in response to the questions of individual teachers who sought him out during the intermissions. Since then he has kept in touch with the officers of the Council, co-operating with them in the plans undertaken under his inspiration and guidance.

Of the questions discussed at the 1921 meeting that of minimum essentials in the mechanics of English aroused most interest among the teachers present. A committee was appointed to draw up a set of minimum requirements, these to be embodied in a report to be published by the Council. The preliminary report of that committee is published elsewhere in this issue of the JOURNAL.

Another suggestion made at this meeting was that English teachers attending the various summer schools get together for the discussion of vital questions in English teaching. As a result of cards sent out to the membership it was found that there would be representatives enough at the University and at the State College for Women to justify sectional meetings of the Council, and at Columbia University to organize a working committee. Accordingly, Mr. C. A. Hibbard,

Mr. A. C. Hall and Miss Laura A. Tillett were asked to assume the leadership of these respective groups. Miss Tillett's group, with the co-operation of Dr. Abbott, undertook the collection and arrangement of a set of libraries consisting of the best bulletins and pamphlets on the teaching of English that could be secured. Elsewhere in the JOURNAL the nature of these libraries and the plan for their distribution is explained more fully. Mr. Hibbard and Mr. Hall reported enthusiastic sectional meetings at the University and the College for Women, both sections enlisting the interest of teachers hitherto unfamiliar with the work of the Council, and both endorsing the movement for adopting standard minimum requirements. It was urged by the University group that a representative of the higher grammar grades be included on that committee. The recommendation was sent to the president of the Council and Miss Inez Watkins of the seventh grade of the Goldsboro Grammar Schools was appointed.

At this meeting of the Council, at the suggestion of Dr. Abbott, affiliation with the National Council was effected and Miss Eleanor Watson elected as a delegate, with Mr. A. C. Hall as alternate. Ill health prevented Miss Watson from attending and Mr. Hall represented the North Carolina Council at that meeting.

The 1922 meeting of the Council will be held at the State College for Women, Greensboro, at some time between March 1 and March 11, the exact date to be announced later. The opening meeting will take place on Friday evening of the date chosen and there will be two sessions on the Saturday following. Plans for the program have not been completed, but the executive committee hopes to secure a man of power and prestige to open the Conference with an address at the evening meeting and to be the guiding spirit of the whole session. At the Saturday morning conference three leading questions will be introduced and opened for round table discussion as follows:

1. *Special Problems in the Teaching of High School Composition*, Miss Eleanor Stratton of the Asheville High School.
2. *Correlation of High School and College English as Emphasized by the National Council of English Teachers*, Mr. A. C. Hall of the North Carolina College for Women.
3. *Model Courses of Study in High School English*, Dr. J. F. Royster of the University of North Carolina. (Dr. Royster has also consented to head the committee appointed to prepare the course of study for the State Department of Education.)

At the Saturday afternoon session besides the reports from the committees referred to above and the election of officers, the executive committee plans to arrange a question and answer period at which time an opportunity will be given to teachers present to present their own particular problems to the specialist or man of

authority, upon the choice of whom the committee is now concentrating its best effort.

It can readily be seen that the success of the program outlined above, as well as the success of the committees now at work, will depend upon the co-operation of the English teachers of the State. It is to bespeak that co-operation that this article has been written. It was said at the recent meeting of the State Teachers' Assembly that the chief business of the State is the education of its children. It is acknowledged by all educators that the most important department of education is the study of the mother tongue. With so heavy a responsibility resting upon them surely teachers of English must welcome the opportunity of reasoning together. The State Council would say, therefore, to every English teacher in the State: "Come and go with us and we will do thee good."

UNIVERSITY EXTENSION SERVICE FOR HIGH SCHOOL ENGLISH TEACHERS

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University degree and State teachers' certificates. Other courses are offered in the departments of economics, history, Latin, mathematics and sociology. Those wishing to take some of this work should write to the Extension Division, stating the course in which they are most interested and requesting that further information be sent.

English teachers who are interested in developing public speaking, debating and essay writing among their students should write to the Extension Division for the free bulletin on "Library Extension Service." This bulletin describes the package library service that can be furnished on debate subjects and lists the books and other material the University Library will lend free to teachers. Every English teacher should make a special effort to see that his school enters the State debating contest held each year by the University Extension Division.

From time to time the Bureau of Public Discussion publishes study outlines which are used widely as programs for women's clubs. Some club outlines in which English teachers may be interested are the following: *Studies in Citizenship for Women, Our Heritage, Studies in American Literature, A Study Course in Modern Drama, Problems in Citizenship for Women, Social Service*, and the *Parent-Teacher Association*.

The Extension Division has several other lines of service which may be used by high school English teachers. These, and in fact all, lines of extension activities, are described fully in a bulletin called "University Extension Service." This bulletin goes free to any teacher who writes for it to the University Extension Division, Chapel Hill, N. C.—C. D. S.